

What is claimed is:

1. A web camera for sending a moving image of a subject to a plurality of terminals through the Internet, said web  
5 camera comprising:

a photographing device for photographing said subject to output moving image data;

an animation generating circuit for processing said moving image data to generate an animation file;

10 a terminal distinction circuit for distinguishing a terminal type; and

a controller for sending said moving image data to said terminal when said terminal is the type that can reproduce said moving image data, and for sending said  
15 animation file to said terminal when said terminal is the type that cannot reproduce said moving image data.

2. A web camera as recited in claim 1, wherein said animation generating circuit extracts picture frames  
20 contained in said moving image data at predetermined intervals to generate said animation file.

3. A web camera as recited in claim 1, wherein said terminal distinction circuit detects the resolution of a  
25 monitor of said terminal, and said animation generating circuit scales down an image of each picture frame contained in said moving image data in accordance with said resolution of said monitor.

30 4. A web camera as recited in claim 1, wherein when said terminal distinction circuit cannot distinguish said

terminal type, said animation generating circuit generates said animation file by extracting picture frames contained in said moving image data at predetermined intervals, scaling down an image of each of said picture frames to  
5 a minimum size, and subtracting the number of color of said image to a minimum.

5. A web camera as recited in claim 1, wherein a format of said animation file is animation GIF, and said animation  
10 generating circuit reduces the color number of each picture frame contained in said moving image data.

6. A web camera as recited in claim 1, wherein said photographing device is a digital camera.

15 7. A method for sending a moving image of a subject to a plurality of terminals through the Internet, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) photographing said subject by a photographing  
20 device to output moving image data;

(b) distinguishing a terminal type by a terminal distinction circuit;

(c) sending said moving image data to said terminal when said terminal is a type that can reproduce said moving  
25 image data; and

(d) processing said moving image data to generate an animation file and sending said animation file to said terminal when said terminal is a type that cannot reproduce said moving image data.

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8. A method as recited in claim 7, wherein said animation file is generated by extracting picture frames from said moving image data at predetermined intervals.

5           9. A method as recited in claim 7, wherein said terminal distinction circuit detects the resolution of a monitor of said terminal, and an image of each picture frame contained in said moving image data is scaled down in accordance with said resolution of said monitor.

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10. A method as recited in claim 8, further comprising the step of:

          (f) sending said animation file to said terminal when said terminal distinction circuit cannot distinguish said  
15 terminal type,

          wherein an image of each frame in said animation file is scaled down to a minimum size, and the number of color of said image is subtracted to a minimum.